



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION  
DIVISION OF MENTAL RETARDATION SERVICES  
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***Relief!***  
***Greene Valley Developmental Center Dismissed from Lawsuit***

**Nashville** – Greene Valley Developmental Center (GVDC), located in Greeneville, is relieved of a 10-year lawsuit regarding institutional conditions at the center. A Federal Court order was signed in Nashville dismissing GVDC. The Division of Mental Retardation Services (DMRS) had petitioned the court in 2001 for a dismissal.

In April, 1997 DMRS entered into a settlement agreement with the advocacy groups People First and the Parent/Guardian Association, and the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). The groups had sued the state a year earlier, charging violations of the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA) at Greene Valley and Clover Bottom Developmental Center in Nashville (*People First of Tennessee, et al., v. Clover Bottom Developmental Center, et al.*). CRIPA allows the DOJ to take action when it finds a pattern or practice of violations of residents' rights at government operated institutions.

"This is a significant milestone for Greene Valley and DMRS," said DMRS Deputy Commissioner Stephen H. Norris. "This achievement validates the policies and measures DMRS has been instituting for some time regarding improvement of all its services. The State of Tennessee is very appreciative to Greene Valley Chief Officer Dr. Henry Meece and his staff for working diligently to bring Greene Valley into compliance with the settlement agreement. Their dedication and commitment can not be overstated."

(More)

Since the filing of the lawsuit in 1996 DMRS and GVDC have been diligently working to bring the center into compliance. A large number of staff were added and trained extensively.

A key component to GVDC's success has been its "partnership" approach to services between the persons who live at the facility and staff. GVDC works closely with residents, garnering advice and fashioning services from the feedback. Active treatment, the continuous process of assessment, development and implementation of support programs by clinicians and direct support staff, is also a vital part of the success.

"Prior to the lawsuit we were a very different organization," said Meece. "It has been the extraordinary effort by our staff and DMRS, which has led us to this point of not just complying, but exceeding the standards set by the agreement."

GVDC's effort was recognized last summer when it received accreditation from The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL). Only six facilities in the country have gained that honor. The CQL evaluates services provided to persons with disabilities, and consults with organizations on positive systems changes.

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